



## Landowners Concerned about New Transmission Line from Wabamun to Fort McMurray

Landowners who would be directly and negatively impacted by a new power line are concerned about the documented health, property value, environmental, visual and agricultural (crops and livestock) impacts of overhead high voltage transmission lines.

Alberta Powerline, a partnership between ATCO Electric (80%) and Quanta Services (20%), will be designing, building, owning and operating the new overhead **Fort McMurray West 500 kV Transmission Project**. The 500 kV single-circuit line would run from the existing Sunnybrook Substation in the Wabamun area to Fort McMurray, and would include a new Thickwood Substation in Fort McMurray and an expanded Livock Substation in the Wabasca area. Two routes have been proposed by Alberta Powerline – one through Westlock County and the other through Barrhead County.

About 40 residents turned out to an open house in Fawcett last week, and about 200 showed up at a Westlock open house last week (Westlock News). A concern by many landowners attending these open houses or who have contacted RETA directly, is the health risk associated with overhead high voltage transmission lines. An ATCO Electric staff member at the open houses tried to dismiss these health concerns by referring to Health Canada and the World Health Organization (WHO), both of which suggest there is inconclusive evidence that electromagnetic fields (EMFs) cause health problems. Although ATCO Electric and most other electricity transmission companies in Canada will cite the WHO or Health Canada as credible sources for information on the health risks of overhead high voltage lines, both institutions have been heavily criticized for being unduly influenced (a.k.a. lobbied) by powerful and well-financed electricity transmission companies for decades, to the point of being labelled as “corrupt” by experts who study EMFs and health problems. See this Fact Sheet on the WHO, this Fact Sheet on Health Canada, and this RETA blog for more information on the credibility of these 2 institutions.

The fact is, hundreds of well-researched medical and scientific studies indicate there are increased health risks of prolonged exposure to overhead power line electromagnetic fields (EMFs) and the corona effect. These risks would apply primarily to people living, attending school, or working near transmission lines, or who would otherwise be situated near power lines over a prolonged period. Studies have revealed many kinds of increased health risks, including: leukemia and many other cancers; Alzheimer’s and Lou Gehrig’s disease; heart disease and circulatory problems; nervous system disorders; retardation of fertilization, fetal resorption, miscarriages and birth defects; immune system deficiencies; depression; suicide; persistent mental disorders; male sexual dysfunction; memory impairment; decrease in visual and motor reaction time; fatigue, headaches and nausea; and behavioural problems.

Other concerns raised by landowners who have contacted RETA about the proposed new line include: property devaluation, visual impacts of unsightly overhead towers and conductors, environmental impacts, and negative effects on their agricultural operations (both crops and livestock).